

as to whether a state of war did, or did not exist when such properties were seized. There will be heavy claims for indemnity for damages done to the ships, cargoes, etc., of Europeans and Americans, when the Chinese affair is settled, but China, having begun hostilities without any declaration of war, will have to pay for this irregularity, by being required to reimburse all who suffered pecuniary loss. Having "called the tune" China will be asked to "pay the piper."

Although some of the greatest wars broke out and went on without any declaration of war, the custom of giving formal notice is quite ancient. The practice was usual with the Greeks and Romans, the event being marked quite ceremoniously. In later times, hostilities were preceded by letters of challenge or of defiance. Heralds were dispatched to declare war, as they were in 1635 and 1657, when trouble arose between France and Spain in the former year, and between Sweden and Denmark in the latter. Before then, however, in 1588, Spain sent her Great Armada to subdue England before giving any formal notice of any kind of an attack being contemplated. Cromwell was equally discourteous, for he attacked Spain without a word of warning, and some very lively times were had both by England, France, Spain, Portugal and Holland, in naval conflicts, before any formal declarations of war were issued. After pounding away at each other's fleets and forts, and after stripping each other of possessions in the West Indies and the Eastern seas, they severally gave formal notice to the enemy that a state of war existed! This, we believe, was done to establish some date for deciding whether certain prizes taken were "lawful," or must be released, as having been seized prior to war being proclaimed. All through the last century the chief nations of Europe were incessantly falling foul of each other. The wealth of the East Indies was coveted by England, France, Denmark, Portugal, Spain, and Holland, and, excited by cupidity, they each pounced down upon any territory which seemed advantageous for trade. Acts of war were continually committed without any formal notice. Indeed, the great wars in Europe in the eighteenth century were all commenced without any declaration of war. At last a strong feeling arose that gross injustice was liable to be done by the system under which one nation was allowed to attack another without stating the cause of the hostile action, and fixing the date for hostilities to commence. Cases were known of a country being attacked without the assailed knowing why. This was, and is, too much like piracy, burglary, highway robbery to be approved by civilized nations, so that, although there is no universally recognized international law requiring a nation to issue a declaration of war before attacking its enemy, it is an established custom amongst civilized powers. Even Mr. Kruger served notice to quit on the British. We fear China would be able to quote an English precedent for commencing an attack on our fleet before giving notice, for, in

1840, England began war with China so unceremoniously.

Before the Crimean war, the Czar of Russia refused to give any reply to an ultimatum delivered to him in person by a special envoy from England. His rude silence was construed to be a notice of war, and shortly afterwards the Lord Mayor and other civic officials went to the Royal Exchange in great state, where war with Russia was proclaimed.

Another declaration of war by silence, by refusal to answer an ultimatum, was made by Italy in 1859, this action being akin to that of a person served with a writ, if he refuses to answer it, or recognize it, it is understood that he wishes the action to go on, he accepts, and responds by silence to his suitors "declaration of war." Of course, an outbreak of civil war, a rebellion, is not preceded by formal notice, for rebels have no government empowered to issue such a declaration. The outbreak which ended in the Majuba Hill disaster was practically a rebellion. Indeed, the war now about closing was a rebellion, for the Crown of Great Britain still retained its suzerainty over the Transvaal when the Boer President demanded the removal of British troops from Natal, a British Colony. China, however, is a sovereign power, it is responsible to the other powers for the safety of their subjects when engaged in occupations in Chinese soil that are not contrary to Chinese law, or to any international agreement or understanding. The Chinese cannot throw off responsibility for any massacres that have taken place, or any attacks upon foreigners or foreign vessels by pleading that these were the acts of rebels. It is a nation's first duty to keep peace at home amongst its own people, and to protect the lives and properties of strangers within its gates is equally obligatory. China, by permitting, or directing attacks upon foreigners, and foreign vessels, has entered practically upon war with a number of powers. The crack of a rifle, the blow of a bludgeon; the shot of a cannon, may be a declaration of war as effective as one made formally by any written declaration, or message given verbally to an ambassador. We fear, however, when claims of indemnity are urged by those who have suffered by the "Boxers" outbreak, that there will be serious difficulty in establishing them, owing to the impossibility of fixing the date when China and the powers came into such contact as constitutes a state of war.

MONTREAL CLEARING HOUSE.

Statement of Clearings.

1900	Total Daily Clearings.	Daily Balance.
July ?	\$2,144,855	\$378,516
" 4	3,253,231	362,809
" 5	2,758,429	378,394